

Near-shore war ships to be based in San Diego

By Otto Kreisher
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

April 30, 2006

The first four of the new littoral combat ships will be based in San Diego, the Navy has announced.

"This is a huge innovation for the Navy," said San Diego-based Vice Adm. Terrance Etnyre, the Navy's top surface warfare commander and head of Naval Surface Forces. "(These ships will) take us down the road to the 21st century, not only in the way we operate but also the way we train."

Littoral combat ships are designed to operate in the shallow and congested waters close to shore, an area called the ocean littorals. Slightly smaller than the current surface warships, the new ships are expected to travel much faster, be more maneuverable and be harder to detect by radar and other sensors.

They also will be operated by a much smaller crew — 40 officers and enlisted personnel in the basic ship's crew, compared with more than 300 for destroyers and 200 for frigates.

The littoral combat ships' unique feature is a platform for portable "mission modules." These modules will enable the vessels to perform a variety of functions.

Modules are being developed to counter sea mines, submarines and small attack boats and to conduct maritime interdiction missions, which are an increasingly important task in the fight against terrorists and piracy.

The Navy expects to buy 55 littoral combat ships.

The first, named Freedom, is a conventional-hull ship being built by Lockheed Martin. It is scheduled to arrive in San Diego in fall 2007, Etnyre said. The second ship, Independence, is a trimaran — or triple-hulled ship — being built by General Dynamics. It should reach San Diego in 2008, Etnyre said.

The first four littoral combat ships will bring about 300 Navy personnel and their family members to San Diego. They also will likely attract representatives from the firms building the ships and mission modules.

San Diego already is home to three experimental vessels: the Sea Shadow, Seafighter and Stiletto.

Find this article at:

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/military/20060430-9999-1m30littoral.html>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.